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the German cities had to be set aside or forced into submission before the Reformation could be triumphant. With regard to the competition of the monasteries with the craft-guilds, there exist a few monographs or local studies which Professor Vedder might have cited in support of his assertion (but did not do so), yet these studies are much too restricted in their scope to justify the generalization which our author has not hesitated to make without even this inadequate confirmatory evidence.

The critic's task would be incomplete did he not call attention to a number of errors contained in Professor Vedder's book which cannot be regarded as mere misprints. On p. 4, for instance, Erfurt, at the time of Luther's entrance into the monastery, is described as having a population of over *sixty* thousand. Several local studies concerning the population statistics of German cities, which have appeared during the last thirty years, make it certain that Erfurt's population in 1500 could hardly have exceeded *six* thousand. Attention should also be called to the fact that, in every instance, "Lueneburg" is spelled "Lueneberg" (pp. 279, 292, 302, 314, 323, and Index, p. 457); "Mecklenberg" is printed for "Mecklenburg" (p. 279, and Index, p. 459); "Regensberg" for "Regensburg" (pp. 363, 364); and "Naumberg" for "Naumburg" (pp. 149, 363, 374, and Index, p. 460).

Professor Vedder's book is eminently readable, yet, in the opinion of the critic, its literary qualities would never win for it a high place in our historical literature, even if it were not marred by such defects as have been enumerated in the foregoing paragraphs.

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### THE PROBLEMS OF MODERN THEOLOGY

There are evidences on every hand that we are entering upon a period of fruitful constructive work in the realm of doctrinal theology. Men are coming generally to recognize that we may turn aside from the discussion of theories of "authority," and may interpret Christianity as a great spiritual movement, possessing the affections of men in such a way as to be a reality with which we must reckon. The number of books dealing with Christianity in this friendly and free spirit of constructive interpretation is gratifying. The present review will consider some recent publications of this nature.

Professor James Ten Broeke speaks as a philosopher who is cordially interested in the wholesome interpretation of Christianity. His carefully

written and scholarly book<sup>1</sup> is intended to give historical evidence for his contention that the dissatisfaction with traditional theology which is so widespread is due to the fact that this theology is expressed in philosophical interpretations which fail to do justice to the experienced facts of Christianity. He believes that modern philosophy is much better fitted than ancient speculation to support the fundamental beliefs of Christian men. He contends that the materials are at hand for a new and convincing theology. In support of the above thesis he presents his argument in three parts: The first section of his book deals with "The Origin and Development of Christian Theology"; the second is entitled "A New Philosophy as the Constructive Basis of a New Theology"; and the third discusses "Contemporary Thought as a Constructive Basis for Theology."

The first portion is a valuable, clear, and suggestive outline of the development of Greek religious thinking prior to the rise of Christianity and during the first three centuries of Christian history. The author's purpose to show the superiority of modern over ancient philosophy as a means of interpreting Christian thought justifies the large space devoted to the process by which Christian doctrine developed into Greek theology. At the same time, one feels that Professor Ten Broeke is much more at home in dealing with the familiar epistemological and cosmological aspects of this movement than he is in his interpretation of Christianity as a religious movement. His own personal *faith* expresses itself repeatedly in the contention that real Christianity is to be found in the religious consciousness of Jesus. All Christians are, according to Ten Broeke, "trying to reproduce in thought and thereby create in themselves Jesus' own consciousness of personal relation to the Father, which is the principle of Christianity, because it was the controlling norm of the consciousness of Jesus" (p. 58). An essentially modern religious aspiration is here assumed to be the central fact of early Christianity. This assumption makes "real" Christianity appear to a large degree alien in spirit to the theological conceptions which were being developed. Ten Broeke is constantly reading his modern Christian *faith* into ancient expressions. For example, to say that "Athanasius was moved to go back to the Christ, *even to the consciousness of Jesus*" (p. 114; italics mine) does not indicate the real nature of Athanasius' conception of Christianity. This essentially unhistorical conception of the nature of early Christianity makes it possible for Ten Broeke to conclude that the

<sup>1</sup> *A Constructive Basis for Theology*. By James Ten Broeke. London and New York: Macmillan, 1914. ix+400 pages. \$3.00.

Greek theology was an inadequate means of expressing Christian belief as he interprets that belief. The strong influence of Harnack is evident throughout this portion, although Ten Broeke is not epistemologically in sympathy with the Ritschlian school.

A similar defect in historical interpretation is found in the exposition of Protestantism. The "principle" of the Reformation is phrased as follows: "It was the return to the consciousness of Jesus in relation to the Father, and the assertion of true spiritual freedom on the part of the individual and the religious community" (p. 125). Again, "It [the Reformation] was the substitution of individual personalities as centers of value and experience in place of an absolute external authority of any sort" (p. 139). Statements like these make fundamental the attitude of protest against the authority of the church, and assume that the Reformation was logically a repudiation of external authority of every kind. As a matter of fact, underlying all Reformation religion is the belief in an objective divine provision for man's salvation, by acceptance of which alone man can be saved. This is so constantly taken for granted by the Reformers that no apology for it is felt to be necessary. To picture the religious aspirations of the Reformers in terms of modern freedom means the depreciation of certain elements which were of primary importance to them. This view makes it possible to argue that doctrines which we today feel to be unacceptable were mere accidental aspects of Protestantism, and that we can bring out the "principle" of Protestantism more adequately in terms of modern philosophy.

The second portion of the book is a valuable contribution, largely because it deals with modern ideals and is not subjected to any modernizing apologetic. It gathers together the essentials of modern religious thinking in great detail and with admirable faithfulness to the sources. It represents the best kind of accurate historical exposition. Kant's interpretation of religion in terms of ethical will, the Hegelian interpretation in terms of knowledge, and the interpretations in terms of feeling given by Schleiermacher and the Ritschlian school are all clearly and discriminately expounded. The approach to the problems of religious interpretation through an analysis of experience and the consequent close linking of experience to the reality of the object interpreted by experience furnish a suggestive and valuable introduction to the main task which the author essays in the third portion of the book.

In this constructive part the implications of social psychology are first set forth, according to which religion is seen to be the quest for a

great Companion, a quest in which the individual is socially bound up with the achievements of the past and the aspirations and activities of his fellow-men. Religious need has socially created a "supernatural world," which is just as real as any other "world" which enters into the thinking of men and forms the basis for action. For the interpretation of this supernatural world we may use modern philosophy, which, whether in the form of absolute idealism, or theism, or idealistic pluralism, justifies the attempt to affirm the reality of a personal God. Ten Broeke himself apparently favors a type of absolute idealism which permits a certain theistic emphasis in order to avoid the appearance of pantheism. But his main purpose seems to be to bring the various types of modern thinking into the field, in order to show how rich is the philosophical material upon which the modern theologian may draw.

In the concrete application of this philosophic material to the problems of belief in the chapter entitled "Some Christian Doctrines and Modern Thought" the author announces his intention to state the "practical" content of Jesus' religious ideals (thus using the norm of Jesus' self-consciousness to determine the content of Christianity), and then to see whether modern philosophy justifies us in affirming this content. But after dealing positively with the filial consciousness of Jesus in relation to God, he takes up questions which perplex the modern mind, such as miracles, answers to prayer, the doctrine of the Trinity, the problem of evil, the problem of freedom, the problem of immortality, etc. Now these were not "problems" at all to Jesus. His consciousness furnishes affirmations, indeed, but not affirmations which definitely meet modern critical inquiries. Ten Broeke here is at a disadvantage because of his non-historical conception of the nature of Christianity. He recognizes varying and conflicting views on these problems in modern Christian thought, but he does not successfully relate "beliefs" to the social religious situation out of which they grew. In his philosophical apologetic his treatment is so eclectic as to disappoint those who look for a consistent "constructive" basis for theology. He repudiates pluralism when discussing the doctrine of God, for he desires a world-order certainly controlled by moral reason. But when he comes to the problem of miracles, he appeals to the Bergsonian conception of free cosmic forces, in order to make place for new and exceptional events. The final chapter on "The Scope and Method of Theology" is singularly inconclusive to one who looks for clear guidance. Ten Broeke simply surveys the many conflicting methods which are in vogue, and suggests that each one starts from some aspect of Christian experience

and that each has some vital contribution to make to the development of theology.

The constructive basis for theology therefore turns out to be after all the attitude of trust in the freedom of the inquiring religious spirit, and a hopeful conclusion that modern idealistic philosophy gives abundant justification to the task of theologizing in terms of the personal relation of man to a personal God. Perhaps this catholic and general view is all that can be said on the subject at present. To the reviewer, however, it seems that if Ten Broeke could have embodied a really historical appreciation of Christianity in his work he would have found the opportunity to do something better than to take over, ready-made, certain beliefs and support these by an eclectic use of modern philosophy. We fail to realize the full significance of the historical continuity of Christian thinking if we view the modern task as the rejuvenating of certain "normative" beliefs by substituting new philosophy for ancient. We are actually in the process of working out a Christianity which shall meet and answer the religious needs of our own age. Modern philosophy is not an extraneous aid. It is itself part of the process of religious development. At several points Ten Broeke seems to have caught a glimpse of this conception of Christianity as a living historical movement. If his admirable historical survey in Part II had been followed by an analysis of the actual process of Christian thinking in its present development he could have related modern philosophy much more "constructively" to theology.

Quite different in spirit is the defense of Christian faith furnished by Professor Ihmels in a collection of seven addresses which were given at different times, and are now collected in one volume.<sup>1</sup> Ihmels feels that faith really needs no support from philosophy. It is strong enough to make good its own affirmations, if it only concentrates attention on the actual sources of its strength. The distinctive feature of Christianity is its revelation. When this revelation is clearly perceived the soul knows with perfect assurance that salvation is possible. Ihmels' theological point of view is succinctly and persuasively stated in three of the addresses: "Wie bewahren wir das Erbe der Reformation und machen es für die Gegenwart fruchtbar?"; "Das Christentum und die Religionsgeschichte"; and "Aufgabe und Bedeutung der Dogmatik." Christian faith rests on the Bible as revelation. The Bible differs from all other literature in that it depicts a *Heilsgeschichte*. This culminates in the

<sup>1</sup> *Aus der Kirche; ihren Lehren und Leben.* Von Ludwig Ihmels. Leipzig: Deichert, 1914. iv+203 pages. M. 4.

life of Jesus and the gospel of salvation connected with him. In this redemptive history God is seeking men. In all other religious literature men are seeking God. Thus the Christian may have an absolute certainty where other religious men may only seek and hope. Involved in this interpretation of biblical history is the affirmation of the essentially supernatural source of our faith. The position of the *religionsgeschichtliche* school is criticized because it destroys the possibility of belief in the absoluteness of our Christian revelation. Theology must undertake to defend and to expound the content of faith as an attitude of absolute assurance. Theology deals with *the* truth, not with a quest for truth. But, in the last analysis, "it is only in a personal religious experience that certainty can be attained concerning the possibility and the actuality of the Supernatural."

This method of Ihmels, staking all as he does ultimately on the subjective convictions of the man who has the right kind of "faith," doubtless seems admirable to those who share Ihmels' particular faith. So far as others are concerned, however, it seems like the hopeless isolation of theology from any possibility of real scientific criticism. Its scientific value consists in its unequivocal clearness in analyzing the content and the mental processes of this particular kind of religious attitude.

Professor Herbert A. Youtz, of Auburn Theological Seminary, has published a stimulating and valuable book dealing with the fundamental problem of theological method.<sup>1</sup> As the author states, certain portions of the book were prepared originally as addresses and as articles in theological journals. But since the addresses represent a unified point of view, the addition of a couple of chapters enabled the author to present his fundamental message in consistent and consecutive form.

Professor Youtz sees that religious faith is now struggling to be big enough to dominate our modern world. The current method of meeting the situation is to attempt to read new and more elastic meanings into the traditional formulae. "To galvanize an old conception into life is a pedagogical feat which wins more applause than the reconstruction of the conception" (p. 10). Professor Youtz would have us realize that vital and forceful religious beliefs must come from the ability to interpret the modern world directly in terms of the activity of the living God. This interpretation of modern life is the task of theology, rather than the mere perpetuation of the "faith once delivered." The body of the book is devoted to a discussion of what this new conception of the task

<sup>1</sup> *The Enlarging Conception of God.* By Herbert Alden Youtz. New York: Macmillan, 1914. x+199 pages. \$1.25.

of theology involves. We can only mention briefly the salient points in the author's program.

First of all, we must recognize the fundamental fact of evolution. It is no longer possible to treat the life of man in terms of static achievements. The older theology, just because it does perpetuate this static point of view, is unfitted to meet the needs of today. The consequence of this evolutionary point of view is the elimination of that quest for finalities and absolutes which is characteristic of the older theological method. "The 'absolute certainty,' in the sense meant, has disappeared with the other absolutes of the older method. Religion has no arbitrary external standard of certainty. With all other true sciences theology comes back to the tests of intelligence and the verification of experience" (p. 63). Such a test demands that we try to get back of familiar words and phrases to the real facts of life which find expression in these words and phrases. The deadening effect of disputations about abstract concepts is clearly and effectively shown. The consequences of adopting this method of theologizing are unflinchingly followed in a suggestive discussion of the attitude which must be assumed toward the church and its traditions, toward the Bible, and toward Christ. These all are to be taken primarily as historically conditioned facts, which bring to us spiritual values interpreted in relation to specific historical conditions of living and thinking. We are to seek in them an inspiring spirit rather than finished doctrinal statements. They cannot be substitutes for theological thinking on our part. They best serve us when they inspire us to do our own thinking in terms of the problems and the resources of our own age. The moral significance of the abandonment of reliance on external authority is set forth with rare discernment in a chapter entitled "The Peril of a Safe Theology." The concluding chapter is a sermon, delivered before the students of the seminary, attempting to show how the values of revelation are more vitally discerned by seeking to understand the religious life of the human Jesus than by a theory of the nature of Christ which removes him essentially from the realm of human problems.

The book ought to be of great service in stimulating confidence in a theological method which is suited to take its place beside the methods of other branches which enjoy the scientific respect of our age. The author's felicitous literary style gives to his discussion unusual charm. His fearless spirit of freedom is combined with great tact in avoiding offensive criticisms of orthodoxy. The concluding sermon, which the author calls a "laboratory" exposition of his method, is

couched in such phraseology that it might readily leave considerable perplexity in the minds of the hearers. In form it is an attempt to maintain a religious assurance based on the theological conception of the *revelation of God in Christ*; but its method of analysis would lead logically to a valuation of the *religious experience of Jesus*. But the book as a whole is a refreshing and stimulating contribution to the progress of theological inquiry.

From a very different point of view the editor of the much-discussed *Foundations* publishes an examination of the serious problems confronting theological thinkers today.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Ten Broeke and Youtz, who view the problems of religion entirely from the point of view of free individualism, Streeter is concerned to defend Christianity as an ecclesiastically organized form of society. The aim of the book is to indicate the lines along which men may work for the ultimate unification of Christianity. In the first chapter the effort is made to state the essentials of Christianity in vital rather than doctrinal form. Love to God and man, discipleship to Jesus, obedience to the will of God as the pathway to theological conviction, the reality of divine grace, and the assurance of forgiveness and of immortality are the practical realities of Christianity. The Christian may maintain a practical positive attitude toward all these without committing himself to any specific philosophical or doctrinal conclusions. Recognizing thus the vital and somewhat fluid character of real Christianity, the author in successive chapters considers the problems of reunion. He generously recognizes that every denomination possesses real Christianity, with, of course, certain peculiar emphases and certain polemic denials. He emphatically repudiates the conception of coercive authority, by which the freedom of any branch of Christianity is to be curtailed. He points out that Christianity in any of its forms is the product of an evolution, and that this evolution is destined to continue and to change the feelings and the doctrines of every denomination. The way is open for a definite movement toward a charitable and just recognition of the positive rights of all denominations, and the gradual grouping of minor subdivisions into larger federations, until an all-embracing federation of all denominations willing to recognize freedom is possible. The essential spirit of the Anglican church, he believes, is comprehensive and charitable. It, unlike the Roman church, will therefore do its utmost to further the spirit and the practical organization of church unity.

<sup>1</sup> *Restatement and Reunion: A Study in First Principles*. By Burnett Hillman Streeter. London: Macmillan, 1914. xxii+194 pages. 2s. 6d.

The broad and generous spirit of the book is a heartening symptom of modern thought. Whether so tenacious a clinging to the necessity of authority (even if authority be spiritually interpreted) is entirely compatible with the spirit of trust in the free outcome of human development is a serious question. For example, Mr. Streeter's method of allegorizing and reinterpreting the phrases of the ancient creeds is precisely that attempt to "galvanize an old conception into life" which to a man of Professor Youtz's temper seems to involve the failure to reach the deepest spiritual meanings of Christianity. But such a spirit of open-mindedness as is revealed in this book is particularly gratifying when it comes from a representative of a church which has a reputation for exclusiveness.

Professor Bacon, of the Yale School of Religion, has published the lectures which he delivered on the E. T. Earl Foundation, at Berkeley, California, in 1912.<sup>1</sup> He speaks as a historian, bringing the historian's tests to bear on certain modern proposals for the reconstruction of our Christianity. He devotes his attention to two such proposals, which represent opposite poles of religious interpretation. On the one hand is ex-President Eliot's suggestion that we shall abandon the mystical and ecclesiastical elements of traditional Christianity and return to the ethical precepts of Jesus himself. On the other hand is the argument that it is precisely the mystical mythology of traditional Christianity which is of religious value. To disengage this from historical entanglement with the historical Jesus and to use it freely without attempting to make Jesus sponsor for it is regarded as the next step in the development of Christianity.

As against the proposal to return to the pure ethical gospel of Jesus, Professor Bacon points out that the historian must recognize the fact that *Christianity* did not begin until the disciples interpreted the person of Christ in such a way as to give them confidence in his power to dominate the future and to give his followers the victory. Moreover, all the records which we have concerning Jesus were written under the domination of some form of this christological faith. To attempt to strip this off would not give us original Christianity at all. On the contrary, it would lead us back of Christianity to Judaism. The historian is compelled to insist that the mystical and christological elements are essential to Christianity from the first. The gospel *about* Jesus is no less essential than the gospel *of* Jesus. But as against the proposal to eliminate the historical reference to Jesus from the doctrine of mystical redemption,

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity Old and New*. By Benjamin W. Bacon. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914. ix+169 pages. \$1.00.

Professor Bacon holds that this also is forbidden by the demands of historical accuracy. For, granting that the Christology of Peter or that of Paul contains imaginative interpretative elements, it is nevertheless evident that the impress of a mighty personality gave content to the ethical and religious ideals of this Christology. Historical accuracy, then, as well as the demands of religion, compel us to continue to express our Christian faith in terms of the confession that Jesus is the Christ. We may and must put into the content of the term "Christ" what is demanded by our own understanding of the religious significance of Jesus; but in so doing we shall only be carrying on the process of Christian interpretation which has been active from the early days of Christianity.

In a supplementary chapter Professor Bacon attempts to indicate how the historian may take the representations of Jesus furnished respectively by Paul, by Mark, and by "Q," and by combining the emphases here found may gain a reliable portrait of the "historical Jesus, dimly and yet truly and surely seen through the transfiguring haze of love and adoration." Here we find combined the ethical and the mystical aspects of religion in such a way as to make Jesus the completely satisfactory revelation of the satisfaction of religious needs.

The survey is valuable and suggestive. Its contention that we need not surrender the mystical side of New Testament faith is one more evidence of the steadily increasing reaction against the Ritschlian interpretation of the beginnings of Christianity. Whether full justice can be done to Christianity within the limits of Professor Bacon's attempt to locate in the historical Jesus all the essentials of that religion is another question. That it is within the province of historical research to "establish forever" the thesis that the ideal of Jesus is "ultimate" (pp. 67 and 70) would be questioned by some; as would the confident appeal to "Q" as a certainly discernible source of exceptional historical reliability. But that historical research makes it imperative to broaden our conception of the scope of Christianity beyond the severely ethical boundaries of Ritschlian or popular "liberal" interpretation is certain. Professor Bacon's study is a distinct aid to the formulation of this broader conception.

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